



Canada's

Agriculture, Food and Beverage INDUSTRY

Canada's Organic Industry

"Organic" is a term that denotes products that have been produced in accordance with organic production standards and certified by a duly constituted certification body or authority. In general, organic agriculture emphasizes high animal welfare standards and the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs. Cultural, biological, and mechanical methods are used where possible as opposed to using synthetic materials to fulfil any specific function within the system. Organic food handlers, processors and retailers adhere to standards to maintain the integrity of organic agriculture products.



Canada is an ideal country for producing organic food because of its large and varied land base, cooler climate and severe winters which reduce pest and disease problems.

Organic farming and processing in Canada is growing. In 2006, approximately 3,555 farmers working on 546,000 hectares of land, and more than 800 processors and handlers produced organic products. Very few other sectors in Canada can claim the double digit annual growth in retail sales that this sector demonstrated over the past decade. Total sales of certified organic food grew 28% overall from 2005 to 2006, with sales of pre-packaged certified organic goods up 31%.

While organic grain production is the largest sector, and also represents by far the largest export commodity, organic production in Canada is much diversified with significant expansion in all commodities and value-added products.

Canada's principle export markets for organic products are currently the United States, European Union and Japan. However, the organic sector is positioning itself to increase and diversify its market share in these and other markets.

A number of organizations have emerged to help farmers, processors and other stakeholders along the way. Canadian Organic Growers (COG) is an education and networking organization with chapters across the country that many operators find to be an invaluable support; the Canadian Organic Trade Association (COTA) is filling an important role in developing markets and promoting and protecting the organic industry; the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) has come forward to represent the sector on regulatory matters; and the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) has become an internationally respected research and education facility. As well, a number of provincial and regional organizations exist to support growth of the sector in Canada.

In addition, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has established an organic value chain roundtable, bringing together leaders from all points along the organic value chain — retailers, producers, processors, exporters and others in the Canadian organic sector — to build a shared understanding of our competitive position, create consensus on how to improve it, and put plans into action.

Federal regulations for organic products are scheduled to come into force on December 14, 2008. These regulations, enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, will provide the oversight and third-party



verification requirements that will give stability to the marketplace, alleviate consumer confusion, and facilitate inter-provincial and international trade in organic products.

With the impending implementation of these regulations, and the continuing co-operative efforts of the organic community with both levels of government that has been the hallmark of our experience to date, the Canadian organic industry is expected to continue its impressive growth well into the future.



For More Detailed Information

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Key Resources

Organic Product Regulations and National Standards:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioe.shtml>

Organic Federation of Canada
<http://www.organicfederation.ca/>

Canadian General Standards Board
http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/index-e.html

Producer & Trade Support:

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
<http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1183748510661&lang=e>

Organic Value Chain Roundtable
http://ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/value_chain_roundtables/organic_e.htm

Canadian Organic Growers
www.cog.ca

Canadian Organic Trade Association
<http://www.ota.com/otacanada.html>

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada
<http://www.organicagcentre.ca/>

Further information on products, suppliers and investment opportunities in the Canadian agri-food industry is available on the Agri-Food Trade Service web site at: www.ats.agr.gc.ca

Canada's food and agricultural products reflect our dedication to excellence, and our deep commitment to safety, quality, environmental responsibility, innovation and service.

In every facet of our industry, we seek to earn the trust of our customers by answering their needs and exceeding their expectations. Those values along with our belief in building strong relationships, have given Canadian agriculture and food products an international reputation for excellence. Customers around the world know that they can trust the goodness of Canada.

